

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1588

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

UNCLAS BANGKOK 4197

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CB

SUBJ: ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHAI RATTAKUN ON CAMBODIA

ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHAI RATTAKUN GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE  
AT PARLIAMENT ON MARCH 13. THE FOLLOWING IS AN INFORMAL USIS TRANS-  
LATION OF THE ENTIRE EXCHANGE WITH REPORTERS.

REPORTER: WHAT PREPARATIONS HAVE WE MADE TO COPE WITH DEVELOPMENTS  
IN THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA?

PHICHAI: THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OF DEFENSE, AND OF  
INTERIOR, HAVE A PLAN IN READINESS ALREADY. SHOULD ANY EMERGENCY  
ARISE, WE ARE READY TO COPE WITH ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION,  
ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO INFILTRATION.

REPORTER: WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY EMERGENCY?

PHICHAI: I MEAN INCIDENTS IN CAMBODIA. SHOULD THERE BE AN EMERGENCY,  
OR SHOULD ANY SERIOUS INCIDENTS OCCUR ALONG OUR BORDER, THEN THESE  
THREE MINISTRIES HAVE A WORK PLAN IN READINESS TO COPE WITH  
VARIOUS SITUATIONS.

REPORTER: HAVE WE WITHDRAWN OUR AMBASSADOR YET?

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PHICHAI: NO. OUR EMBASSADOR IS STILL IN PHNOM PENH.

REPORTER: WHEN WILL HE RETURN HERE?

PHICHAO: NO STATEMENT AT ALL HAS BEEN MADE REGARDING THE RETURN OF OUR AMBASSADOR. HE IS STILL IN PHNOM PENH AND OFFICIALS OF OUR EMBASSY ARE STILL THERE. KHUN ASA RETURNED HERE ALONE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. ON MARCH 8, OUR AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA RETURNED HERE IN ORDER TO MAKE A REPORT, AND HE HAS GONE BACK TO PHNOM PENH ALREADY.

REPORTER: WHAT DID HE SAY IN HIS REPORT?

PHICHAO: HE REPORTED ON THE SITUATION IN GENERAL, FACTS WE HAVE HEARD OF ALREADY, SUCH AS THAT THE SITUATION CAUSES CONCERN.

REPORTER: IN REGARD TO THE TENDENCY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS TO REJECT THE REQUEST MADE BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL AID FOR CAMBODIA, DO YOU THINK THAT THIS WILL BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM?

PHICHAO: I FEEL THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS A COMMITMENT TO CAMBODIA. I HEARD YESTERDAY THAT AN AMERICAN SUBCOMMITTEE HAD APPROVED A BUDGET OF 125 MILLION DOLLARS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. IT IS A MATTER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CAMBODIA, BECAUSE COMMITMENTS EXIST BETWEEN THE.

REPORTER: DOES THAT MEAN THAT AMERICA CANNOT DESERT CAMBODIA AND LED RED CAMBODIANS SEIZE IT?

PHICHAO: SPEAKING WIDELY AND IN GENERAL FROM THE ANGLE OF WHAT COMMITMENTS THE UNITED STATES HAS TO ITS ALLIES, MY VIEW IS THAT IT WILL NOT BREAK PROMISES MADE OR DESERT ITS ALLIES, AND REGARDLESS WHETHER ITS ALLIES ENJOY PEACE AND HAPPINESS OR SUFFER TROUBLE AND HARDSHIPS, I FEEL CERTAIN IT WOULD NOT DESERT THE.

REPORTER: SHOULD SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS GO AND HALT THE RED CAMBODIANS, WOULD YOU CONSIDER THAT AS CONSTITUTING INTERFERENCE?

PHICHAO: THAT CONCERNS SOUTH VIETNAM, THEREFORE I CANNOT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION. BUT IN REGARD TO THAILAND, WE WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES UNDER ANY CIRCUM-  
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STANCES. THAT IS DEFINITE.

REPORTER: DOES IT MEAN THAT WE WILL NOT SEND MILITARY FORCES INTO CAMBODIA?

PHICHAO: DO YOU MEAN THAI MILITARY FORCES? IT IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR POLICY NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL

AFFAIRS OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

REPORTER: DO WE HAVE ANY COMMITMENTS TO CAMBODIA?

PHICHAO: WE HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA, WITH THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH IS ITS LEGAL GOVERNMENT AT PRESENT.

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT THE STATEMENT MADE BY KHUN PRACHA (KUNAKASEM, MFA SPOKESMAN) THAT WE ARE READY TO EXTEND RECOGNITION TO THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT IN PHNOM PENH, REGARDLESS WHICH SIDE IT BELONGS TO?

PHICHAO: THE PRINCIPLE WE ADHERE TO WIDELY IS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE LEGAL GOVERNMENT AND IF THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY RECOGNIZE THAT GOVERNMENT AS BEING THEIR LEGAL GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, AND AT PRESENT THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT -- I AM TALKING OF THE PRESENT CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT, NOT OF PRESIDENT LON NOL -- IS THE LEGAL GOVERNMENT, AND WE EXTENDED RECOGNITION TO IT FROM THE START. BUT SHOULD THERE BE ANY CHANGES IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CAMBODIA, THAT WOULD BE ITS OWN AFFAIR, NOT CONCERNING US.

REPORTER: SHOULD THE RED CAMBODIAN SIDE SEIZE ALL POWER AT ONCE, WOULD THAILAND EXTEND RECOGNITION TO IT?

PHICHAO: AS I HAVE SAID ALREADY, THE PRINCIPLE WE ADHERE TO WIDELY IS FOR OUR GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE LEGAL GOVERNMENT AND WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY RECOGNIZE AS BEING THEIR GOVERNMENT.

REPORTER: OUR NEW ACTING PRIME MINISTER SAYS HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT CAMBODIA WOULD COME AND INFILTRATE INTO OUR COUNTRY, BECAUSE AT THE START IT WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON RECONSTRUCTION OF ITS OWN COUNTRY; THEREFORE IT WOULD HAVE TO SPEND ALL ITS TIME ON ITS OWN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

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PHICHAO: THAT'S VERY TRUE. IF AND WHEN PEACE IS RESTORED TO CAMBODIA OR TO VIETNAM, THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ENTIRELY ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRY. THAT IS MOST CERTAIN.

REPORTER: WILL WE GIVE THEM AID IN THE TASK OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRY AFTER THE WAR IS ENDED? WE ADHERE TO A GENERAL PRINCIPLE THAT WE WISH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO ENJOY PEACE AND QUIET.

ANY AID WE COULD GIVE WOULD BE GIVEN THROUGH EXISTING REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THROUGH ASEAN.

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